




BEN SHELLEY PRESIDENT
REX LEE JIM VICE PRESIDENT

CONTACT: Deswood Tome
Navajo Nation President and Vice President
Blackberry: (928) 286-7544
Office: (928) 871-7884
Laphillda Tso
Blackberry: (928) 637-5507

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President Shelly Tours WECC Reliability Coordination Center and Joined by CERT Director

LOVELAND, Colo—Navajo President Ben Shelly today toured the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Reliability Coordination Center (RCC) to learn more of how power is monitored in the western United States.

"We are a big producer of power," said President Shelly. "We want transmission owners and end users to know we serve an important role in the energy future for America."

Western Electricity Coordinating Council is a non-profit trade organization whose purpose is to ensure a reliable, bulk electric system to all or parts of 14 western states, British Columbia, Canada, and Baja California Norte, Mexico.

"We are shaping our energy policy," said the president, "and we will present it to the Council for their approval." As the president took office he outlined in his address, "With our resources, coal, natural gas, oil, uranium, and capacity for renewable energy, we will become an energy-producing nation again. We will create a new, comprehensive energy policy."



President Shelly is shown an energy map by Byron Woertz, WECC Senior Project Manager, along with Brett Wangen, an engineer. First Lady Martha Shelly in background.

Earlier this year the president held townhall forums in all agencies to hear from people, groups, organizations, and local leaders and receive their input in the formation of an energy policy. The draft policy is now in the finishing review process. It outlines the Navajo Nation's future for energy production and sets the drive to develop the nation's energy resources.

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“Our visit today is one of several big steps to setting the stage for tomorrow’s energy production,” the president said. It’s important we shake hands with these groups so that we can together make room for expansion.”

Receiving the president at the Reliability Coordination Center were Byron Woertz, the senior project manager, and Brett Wangen, WECC’s Director of Energy Management Systems.

“We value your input,” Woertz said to the president. “We encourage your participation,” he said. WECC is made up of several member classes. “The Navajo Nation can fit in several of these classes, and as you build your transmission line you can serve as a transmission owner,” said Woertz.

The president in March appointed Sam Woods, an engineer who has built power plants during his career, to head his energy team and drive the policy for development, creation, and job creating opportunity.

President Shelly’s visit to WECC’s Reliability Coordination Center is the first for a tribal leader to tour the facility. The Western Electricity Coordinating Council projects that power will serve 90.7 million people in the 14 western states in 2020, an anticipated 13 percent increase in population. In 2009, more than 860,834 gigawatts supplied the western United States. By 2020, WECC expects the number to grow to 981,620 GWh.

Joining the president in today’s tour was David Lester, who serves as the executive director for the Council of Energy Resource tribes based in Denver, Colorado.

“I was honored to be with the president today,” said David Lester. “The Navajo Nation with its energy future is a major contributor for many years to come.”

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